

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 10 ANKARA 002491

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR G/TIP, G, INL, DRL, EUR/PGI, EUR/SE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [KCRM](#) [PHUM](#) [KWMN](#) [SMIG](#) [KFRD](#) [PREF](#) [TU](#) [TIP](#) [IN](#) [TURKEY](#)

SUBJECT: TIP IN TURKEY: TURKISH MEDIA ATTENTION, April 15-30, 2005

1. (U) In response to G/TIP inquiries, national and international media sources published the following news articles about TIP in Turkey. Text of articles originally published in Turkish is provided through unofficial local FSN translation.

2. (U) Published on Wednesday, April 20 in The Messenger, <http://www.messenger.com.ge>;  
TITLE: Georgians Still Seek Jobs Abroad

BEGIN TEXT: The detention of a bus full of Georgian women on the Russian-Finnish border in March reiterated the desperation of a large part of the Georgian population to find, albeit menial, work.

While investigations indicate they were not heading to Europe as part of sex-trafficking, they were still examples of human trafficking - most lacked even basic cash, few had any idea of the specific route of the trip and all had received visas for their trip from the same consular official in Moscow.

This week President Mikheil Saakashvili declared that Georgia will cancel its visa regime unilaterally with numerous developed countries. He argues the move will boost tourism and investments. At the same time, it may be a preliminary bid to get improved visa rights for Georgians seeking to travel abroad. However, until Georgia's economy improves and the problem of unemployment diminishes, it is unlikely these countries will be willing to lower requirements.

Ten years ago the Shevardnadze-administration promised to create one million new jobs in the country but it is clear that they fell short of this mark. The Citizens Union, the ruling party at the time, claimed that it had in fact created many new opportunities and cited as an example efforts to give state owned lands to rural inhabitants.

Agricultural work, however small scale, is an important factor in determining the country's employment rates, particularly since government statistics count a person as fully employed if they eke out a living from family farm plots.

This statistical procedure means the number of officially unemployed registered in Georgia is much lower than the number of people who have lost former jobs. According to the government's 2004 statistical data, the number of unemployed people totaled 224,000 last year, including 203,300 in urban centers and 41,400 in the villages. The bulk of the unemployed are registered in Tbilisi, approximately 104,200 persons, as reports Rezonansi.

Migration is a major reason for the low levels of unemployment. In 2004, the an estimated 4.7 people for every 1,000 left the country. By comparison, Romania has a migration loss of only 0.13 migrants per 1,000 residents. Some of the emigrants take their families with them while others send money back home to Georgia. Working legally in a foreign country is an elusive dream for most Georgian s and instead they look for jobs in informal sectors, such as construction, homecare, cleaning and the sex industry.

Current statistics show a majority of Georgian migrants are in western countries, particularly Turkey, Greece, Spain, Holland and Belgium. Whereas in Turkey and Greece an entire family may look for work, in Spain it is only men who seek jobs, mostly in the construction industry, reports Rezonansi.

In a recent report on Georgians working abroad, the paper states salaries in Greece range from EURO 350-800 per month, depending on a person's language skills. In Spain salaries are higher, with women earning an average EURO 700 per month. Men working on construction sites are paid by the hour - EURO 4-8 for unqualified illegal workers and for EURO 8-10 qualified workers. Holland is one of the best places for emigrant workers, the paper states, because they can receive an average pay of EURO 10 per hour, only slightly less than the current monthly pension in Georgia. END TEXT.

3. (U) Reported by the Sofia News Agency on Wednesday, April 20, <http://www.novinite.com/newsletter/>:

TITLE: Sofia Lines FBI to Bust Criminal Ring

BEGIN TEXT: Bulgarian policemen have lined FBI agents

to bust a major channel for human trafficking and forged identity papers manufacture.

The criminal ring has been under watch on the territories of Greece, Turkey and Bulgaria for six months, Bulgarian police announced.

Twelve masterminds of the channel have been arrested, along with an illegal immigrant, and another nine members of the criminal ring are sought for.

In Bulgaria, the network has spread in Sofia, Pernik, Kardzhali and Haskovo, Interior Ministry's Secretary Lieutenant-General Boyko Borissov announced on Wednesday.

Under the illegal scam, forged documents were made up in Bulgaria for individuals who had crossed Bulgarian-Turkish border illegally and sought to further towards countries of Western Europe, through either Turkey, or Greece.

Besides identity documents, the criminals have falsified also driving licenses, visas and euro, Bulgarian police said. END TEXT.

14. (U) Reported by the Anadolu Ajansi on Thursday, April 21:

TITLE: In an Operation Two Hotels Were Raided and 41 People were Detained, including 37 Women Allegedly involved in Prostitution

BEGIN TEXT: Istanbul (AA) In an operation two hotels were raided in Silivri and 41 people, including 37 women, who allegedly were involved in prostitution were detained.

Units from the Istanbul Police Law and Order and Foreigners Departments after receiving information from abroad (on the hotels) put under surveillance the two hotels in Silivri.

The police discovered that one of the hotels was used for accommodation and the other for prostitution. They raided both at the same time.

In the operation 37 foreign women who were involved in prostitution, as well as two responsible directors of the hotels and two others who were mediating in prostitution were detained.

The women in their testimony to the police said that they voluntarily came to Turkey and (willingly) got involved in prostitution. They were taken to the Foreigners Department for deportation.

The other four people were sent to the prosecutor for legal action. END TEXT.

15. (U) Published in Southeast European Times, Thursday, April 21, <http://www.setimes.com>:

TITLE: Bulgarian Police, Western Services Smash Human Trafficking Channel

BEGIN TEXT: SOFIA, Bulgaria -- The interior ministry announced on Wednesday (20 April) that the National Service for Fighting Against Organised Crime has broken a human trafficking channel, with the assistance of the FBI office in Sofia, as well as German and French services. The channel, which trafficked illegal immigrants to EU member states using forged documents, was under watch for six months in Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey.

In other news, official statistics suggest employment in Bulgaria's informal or grey economy was cut almost twofold in the past two years. It is estimated that around 14 per cent of all workers are currently engaged in the grey economy. END TEXT.

16. (U) Published in the Turkish Daily News, Thursday, April 21, 2005:

TITLE: Brutal human traffickers in the Balkans  
BEGIN TEXT: Belgrade - The Associated Press - Human traffickers are growing every more brutal, increasingly targeting children over the internet, in schools and youth groups, international officials said as they presented an annual report on Wednesday on human trafficking in southeastern Europe. "It's an extremely sophisticated crime network; the faster you respond, the faster they change trends," said Mary E. Black, a UNICEF anti-trafficking coordinator and one of the presenters who launched the report in Belgrade. END TEXT.

17. (U) Reported by the Macedonian Press Agency on Saturday, April 23, <http://www.mpa.gr>:

TITLE: Komoutsakos on the Turkish Ambassador Visit to Thrace  
BEGIN TEXT: Athens, 22 April 2005. Greece has nothing to comment. It has nothing to say and nothing to hide.

Equality before the law is a reality in Thrace and in accordance with the European standards, principles and values. Greece is a European country and law is applied equally on all Greek citizens, stated Foreign Ministry spokesman Giorgos Koumoutsakos on the occasion of the visit of the Turkish ambassador to Athens to the Muslim villages in Thrace, northeastern Greece. Referring to the 12th Black Sea Economic Cooperation Foreign Ministers' Council meeting to take place tomorrow, he said that this is the last ministerial meeting under Greek Presidency. In the meeting the BSEC ministers will adopt the Komotini Agreement on actions concerning the sectors of energy, tourism, good governance, measures against organized crime and illegal human trafficking, transportation, market economic cooperation and specifically, small-medium sized businesses.

He also underlined the BSEC Greek Presidency was marked in a way by the signing of the cooperation memorandum on the Burgas-Alexandroupolis oil pipeline. END TEXT.

18. (U) Published by Sofia BTA on Thursday, April 21:

TITLE: Bulgaria: Further Arrests in Human Trafficking, ID Counterfeiting Case Announced  
BEGIN FBIS TRANSCRIBED TEXT: Khaskovo, April 21  
(BTA)-Four more organizers of a ring trafficking people from Turkey through Bulgaria to the countries of the EU and counterfeiting IDs have been arrested, Interior Ministry Chief Secretary General Boyko Borisov said. He added that the four were arrested in the Pernik-Sofia region.

The police confiscated computer configurations, hard discs, passports, driving licenses, including a passport of a Romanian national.

The operation called "Spectrum" is continuing, General Borisov said. Some 100 policemen are combing Kurdzhali region for the three remaining immigrants, Gen. Borisov said.

General Borisov said in Khaskovo Wednesday (20 April) that twelve organizers of the ring had been arrested in a specialized operation of the National Service for Combating organized Crime and the Regional Directorates of the Interior in Khaskovo, Pernik, Sofia and Kurdzhali. The operation is conducted with the assistance of FBI offices. END TEXT.

19. (U) Published by Reuters News on Sunday, April 24:

TITLE: Migrant women trapped in Europe's sex industry  
BEGIN TEXT: LONDON, April 24 (Reuters) - The money Rosa was earning in a Turkish shoe factory was not enough to support the three children she had left behind in Ukraine.

Then her new friend in Turkey, Katerina, told her she could earn \$700 a month as a casino waitress in Bosnia and convinced Rosa to come home with her to Moldova and then make their way to Bosnia.

"I began to think of all the things I could do to change my life to help my children, my family."

As the time came to leave Moldova, Katerina said she had a problem with her passport and would join Rosa in Bosnia a week later. At the station, she introduced Rosa to a Romanian man who would accompany her.

Rosa felt something was wrong when she said goodbye and Katerina just turned away.

"I pushed my feelings aside," said Rosa, who declined to give her real name. "I don't usually trust anyone, but I told myself that sometimes you have to have faith."

Rosa paid Katerina \$300 to get her a job but a criminal gang had already paid Katerina \$700 to make Rosa their slave.

She was smuggled across Europe in cars and once in a fold-away bed on a train, was sold and resold, beaten, raped and forced to work in brothels.

She was afraid to escape because her captors had kept her passport, home address and photos of her children.

Rosa was freed months later in Britain when police raided a sauna she was working in. But her captors are still at large.

Poverty, war, open borders and domestic violence are prompting increasing numbers of people from eastern Europe and beyond to seek work in the wealthy West. With governments tightening limits on immigration, women desperate for work in bars, shops and hotels have come to rely on crooks to spirit them across borders using false identities.

"The profits are huge and the money the traffickers wave in potential victims' faces would certainly outweigh the salaries they can expect by staying at home," said Richard Danziger, head of the counter-trafficking unit of the International Organization for Migration in Geneva.

On the wrong side of the law in a foreign land, some of the women find themselves forced into prostitution. They are powerless to resist their captors. Many have sex with up to 30 men a day for months on end.

OUT OF SIGHT

The trade in people for forced sex has mushroomed into

a \$12 billion industry to rival drug trafficking and gun-running. Because the victims are locked in rooms or moved around in secret, it is almost impossible to trace them.

It also makes quantifying the problem virtually impossible. Five years ago, the British government estimated that as few as 140 or as many as 1,400 women had been smuggled into the country and forced to work as prostitutes.

Social workers say the problem has grown alongside lurid Internet sites and flyers plastered on the walls of phone booths fuelling a demand for unprotected and risky sex that few women would willingly supply.

"There is definitely too much work to deal with," said Anna Johansson of the London-based Poppy Project, which helps women trying to leave prostitution. "We're getting referrals from Birmingham, Sheffield, Liverpool, from all across the country."

Many women contract chlamydia, syphilis and sometimes HIV because they are forced to have unprotected sex. They are often left with painful scars and some become sterile. Most suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder.

"Almost all those we work with have flashbacks and nightmares and cannot sleep," said Johansson. "They can be extremely frightened of strangers and find it hard to go out alone."

She said one woman had approached the Poppy Project after leaping to freedom from a second-storey window, breaking bones in her foot.

Another's hopes were raised when a client promised to help her and bought her from her captor, then locked her away in an apartment and visited her at night twice a week on the way home to his wife.

FROM SOHO TO SUBURBIA

Last month, three east European men were jailed for up to 18 years under new British trafficking laws after they lured a 15-year-old Lithuanian girl to Britain on the promise of a summer job, then sold her for 4,000 pounds (\$7,586).

Three months later she turned up barefoot at a northern England police station after eluding her "owner" in a nightclub.

But renewed efforts to stamp out the trade may be pushing it further underground, from red-light districts such as London's Soho to houses and apartments in the suburbs, many of which are unknown to the police.

"Women here are not advertised. Access is gained by word of mouth," said Johansson. "That's quite dangerous as the authorities are not that likely to come across them."

Campaigners say anti-immigration policies could be making things worse. Sending victims straight home means they cannot testify against their owners in court, and can expose them to more danger by landing them back where they were kidnapped.

"You can't break the problem of trafficking by sending people back to where they were trafficked from," said Mary Cunneen, director of Anti-Slavery International. Last year a woman helped put her captors behind bars for nine years. Fearing reprisals if she returned to her small village in Moldova, she applied for asylum in Britain.

"She applied in February last year but there has still been no response," said Johansson. "The chance of her being re-trafficked is high, but this has not been recognised." END TEXT.

10. (U) Reported by the Anadolu Ajansi on Monday, April 25:  
TITLE: 29 Illegal Immigrants Captured Near Samos, One Turk Arrested  
BEGIN TEXT: AA reporting from Athens. The Greek Coast Guard captured 29 illegal immigrants near Samos island and detained a Turk for trafficking these people.

The Greek Maritime Commerce Ministry noted that the illegal immigrants were from Afghanistan and Iraq and the Turk who brought them to the island and who tried to flee was Mehmet Ulu (37).

Ulu will be sent to the prosecutor. END TEXT.

11. (U) Reported by the Anadolu Ajansi on Tuesday, April 26:

TITLE: Prostitution Operation in Istanbul

BEGIN TEXT: During an operation in some hotels, bars, discothques and night clubs, 132 foreign women who are allegedly involved in prostitution and four people who were serving as mediator were captured

In an operation against some hotels, bars, discothques and night clubs in various sub-provinces of Istanbul in the past one week, 132 foreign women who allegedly were involved in prostitution and four people

who were mediating for prostitution were captured.

According to information gathered by the AA correspondent, Istanbul Foreigners Police and Public

c

Order Police Morals Department conducted operations in the hotels, bars, discothques and nigh clubs in Silivri, Bakirkoy, Beyoglu and Besiktas.

During these operations 132 foreign women from Russia, the Ukraine, Moldavia and Kyrgyzstan who were allegedly involved in prostitution were captured and four Turks were detained for mediating for prostitution.

While the women were sent to the Foreigners' Department for necessary (paper) work for their deportation the four (Turks) who were sent to the prosecutor were arrested and put in jail. END TEXT.

12. (U) Published by CBC News Viewpoint on Wednesday, April, 27:

TITLE: False Hope and Shattered Dreams

BEGIN TEXT: Lured by the promise of better prospects and quality of life, thousands of Ukrainian women have left their homes and families only to become victims of human trafficking.

While they're often promised work as waitresses, in stores, or as domestic workers, many young women are forced into sexual exploitation, usually to pay off the cost of their "migration." Stripped of their passports, threatened and abused, these women become trapped.

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Ukraine is one of the main European countries of origin for human trafficking for the purpose of forced prostitution. Although the exact number of victims is unclear, estimates indicate that since Ukraine's independence in 1991, as many as 11 million Ukrainian citizens have crossed the border to work abroad, usually irregularly. Thousands of these people became victims of trafficking.

While men are also trafficked into forced labour situations and make up about two-thirds of migrants, women make up the overwhelming majority of those returning as victims of trafficking.

IOM assisted nearly 1,800 trafficked people between 2000 and the end of 2004, including 625 people last year alone. The number of people assisted increases each year. IOM statistics show that 289 trafficking cases were filed by the Anti-Trafficking Unit of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 2003 and 169 cases were filed in 2002.

Also in 2002, Interpol Ukraine received 742 notices from 30 countries concerning trafficking involving Ukrainian victims.

With declining standards of living, low wages, and generally few employment prospects in Ukraine, many view work abroad as the best option available to them. The thought of sending money home to their families also gives them the extra push they need.

For women, the motivation to leave is even greater as many are looking to flee situations at home involving moral, verbal, sexual or physical assault. According to the IOM assessment, the collapse of the social infrastructure following the breakup of the Soviet Union has created an extra burden for many Ukrainian women, particularly in rural areas where they do all housework with no electricity or running water.

Consequently, more women are pressured to seek unskilled, low wage employment abroad such as waiting on tables, housekeeping, personal care or dancing. Although a few women know they are going abroad to be prostitutes, many learn their fate upon arrival in the destination country.

Victims are usually recruited through a combination of acquaintances and intermediaries at nightclubs, student gatherings, on public transportation, or at train stations in regional city centres. Women - often mother and daughter teams - are the primary recruiters in Ukraine while men control recruitment abroad. Trafficking victims also act as recruiters - either forcibly or on their own upon their return to Ukraine, knowing the profit that can be made.

So where do victims end up? IOM has assisted Ukrainian



trafficking victims from more than 40 countries including South Korea, Nigeria and Yemen. But more than two-thirds of IOM's caseload returned from Italy, Greece, Poland, Macedonia, Russia and Turkey. Victims of trafficking are also found in the United Arab Emirates, Germany, Portugal, Spain, the former Yugoslavia, Cyprus, Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Romania.

Counter-trafficking initiatives are high on the list of priorities for many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Ukraine. A great deal of effort is spent on prevention - specifically through awareness campaigns - and legislation has been made to combat trafficking. Anti-trafficking hotlines have been set up and a network of NGOs across Ukraine has been established to co-ordinate victim assistance and prevention initiatives.

Organizations such as the IOM, Revival of the Nation, La Strada International Women's Rights Centre and Faith, Love, Hope assist returning victims with reintegration, travel assistance, accommodation, legal assistance, medical care, counselling, and vocational training.

On an international level, all embassies of the Schengen countries (a bloc of 15 European nations) in Kiev meet monthly to share information on the topic and have created a blacklist of tourist agencies with whom they will no longer co-operate because of the agencies' involvement in trafficking. As a result, visas will not be issued to individuals who use these agencies as intermediaries.

However, prevention of trafficking is made difficult for Ukrainian authorities and international organizations because of the irregularity of the migration process, even for successful migrants.

Many successful migrants get around work permit regulations by travelling to the country of destination independently as tourists and staying there, working illegally. Successful migrants usually have a higher education, contacts in the country of destination, and money to pay for the travel abroad.

Many female victims, ashamed of what they did when abroad, never tell their families or friends about their experience because they are afraid to come forward lest they be stigmatized. Others, many of whom are men, are not aware they were victims of trafficking.

All of this makes collecting information useful for prevention and prosecuting traffickers a bigger challenge than it already is, allowing the situation to go on indefinitely. END TEXT.

13. (U) Published by Armenialiberty, [www.armenialiberty.org](http://www.armenialiberty.org) on Wednesday, April 27:

TITLE: Journalist Inquiry Implicates Armenian Officials in Dubai Trafficking

BEGIN TEXT: The Armenian authorities have done little to combat illegal trafficking of hundreds and possibly thousands of Armenian women abroad for sexual exploitation despite their persistent claims to the contrary, according to the findings of a nearly year-long journalistic investigation.

Edik Baghdasarian, a prominent investigative reporter, and Ara Manoogian, an Armenian-American activist, have suggested that senior law-enforcement officials in Yerevan are maintaining close ties with Armenian prostitution rings in the United Arab Emirates for personal gain. They allege in particular that some of those officials regularly visit Dubai to collect bribes from the local Armenian pimps and women trafficked by them.

"We have compelling evidence we collected there that suggests individuals within the Armenian government and in high-ranking positions are directly involved with this ring," says Manoogian.

The two men have repeatedly visited the Gulf Arab nation over the past year, interviewing scores of Armenian prostitutes and secretly videotaping glitzy night clubs where they usually find clients. Their detailed accounts of the Dubai sex business were presented in a series of reports that appeared recently in the Hetq.am online publication of Baghdasarian's Association of Investigative Journalists. Baghdasarian has promised to make more scandalous revelations in a

separate documentary which is expected to be aired by an Armenian TV channel next month.

The Hetq.am reports suggest that there could be as many as 2,000 Armenian prostitutes working in the UAE and other Gulf states at present. Virtually all of them are said to have traveled there with fake Russian passports provided by their traffickers in Moscow. UAE law forbids foreign single women below the age of 31 from entering the country. The documents overstating the women's age thus allow prostitution ringleaders to easily flout this restriction.

Baghdasarian and Manoogian claim that the UAE authorities are well aware of that but turn a blind eye because they too have a share in the business involving tens of thousands of women from across the former Soviet Union. "This is a well-organized business with a rigid chain of command," says Baghdasarian.

Most of the trafficked women come from poor families and were lured into prostitution with a promise of quick money. "I couldn't find a job [in Armenia]," one of them, a divorced woman from a village in southern Armenia, is quoted as saying in a Hetq article. "Wherever I went, they asked me to sleep with them before they would offer me a job. We Armenians are like that - if you're divorced, then that's it, they can think anything about you."

The prostitutes reportedly have to give the Armenian pimps in Dubai a large part of their income. According to the authors of the inquiry, many of them are forced to have sex 10 or even more clients a day in order to secure the minimum daily sum required by their "employers." They say that the Armenian pimps are in turn subordinated to a Syrian-born Arab known as Assad. He is said to have strong connections with officials at the UAE's police and immigration departments.

Scores of Armenian women are also thought to have been trafficked to other parts of the Middle East, notably Turkey. The phenomenon dating back to the mid-1990s came under public spotlight in 2002 when the U.S. State Department placed Armenia in the so-called "Tier3" group of states which Washington believes are doing little to tackle illegal cross-border transport of human beings.

The embarrassing criticism led the Armenian authorities to take what the State Department later described as "significant efforts" to reduce the scale of human trafficking. They set up a special inter-ministerial commission tasked with tackling the problem. It also began to be publicly discussed by government officials and non-governmental organizations.

Armenia was removed from the U.S. blacklist and upgraded to the "Tier 2" category in 2003. "The Government of Armenia does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so," the State Department said in a report last year.

Baghdasarian disagrees. "The prosecutors say they are combating the problem, but I don't see any action," he says.

Armenia's Office Prosecutor-General rarely launch criminal investigations into suspected instances of human trafficking. Only two such cases were reported last year. Although Armenia's new Criminal Code enacted in 2003 raised the maximum jail term for trafficking from two to eight years, court rulings against individuals convicted of related charges have remained lenient.

One such person, Amalia "Nano" Mnatsakanian, was arrested in the UAE on an Interpol warrant and extradited to Armenia in March 2004. She was sentenced to two years' imprisonment by a Yerevan court last August only to be released less than two months later. Another reputed pimp, Marietta Musaelian, is expected to be released soon, well before completing her two-year sentence.

Baghdasarian says most of their "colleagues" remain at large and have little to worry about. As recently as last February he sent a young female journalist posing as a prospective prostitute to two women known to be involved in a Dubai prostitution ring. Their conversation in a Yerevan apartment was secretly recorded.

"I've sent more than a hundred people to the Emirates," one of the women called Sirush told the undercover

journalist. "They were from 16 to 27. I don't take anyone older."

"It'll cost me \$3,000-\$4,000 to get you to Dubai. You'll be met in Moscow and they'll get you a new passport. After that you'll go to Dubai," she added.

"If you go there, you won't want to come back," said the other pimp, Nelli.

Andranik Mirzoyan, head of the investigations department at the Prosecutor-General's Office, claimed on March 16 that most traffickers remain unpunished because they enjoy government protection in the UAE. "There [in Dubai] a pimp is protected by the police and by the 'authorities' [criminal gangs]. They have their own laws, and there are some problems," he complained after a meeting of senior prosecutors that discussed the problem.

Mirzoyan also told reporters that a team of Armenian investigators traveled to Dubai in February to try to "persuade" Armenian prostitutes to return home. But Baghdasarian insists that the officials' actions were less than altruistic.

"We have recordings of girls in Dubai saying that they gave thousands of dollars to a particular employee of the prosecutor's office. We know their names, where and when they met," he says, adding that such visits from Yerevan have been regular.

Citing unnamed Dubai prostitutes, Baghdasarian wrote last month that one of those officials, Aristakes Yeremian, cut a deal with at least one Armenian pimp. The Prosecutor-General's Office has still not reacted to the allegation.

But Yeremian, who is a senior investigator at the law-enforcement agency, rejected the charges on Wednesday. "Such a thing is impossible," he told RFE/RL. Yeremian admitted meeting several Armenian pimps in Dubai "for questioning" but denied extorting any money from them through blackmail and arrest threats.

Visiting Yerevan last July, Russian Interior Minister Rashid Nurgaliev announced the arrest a "criminal group" of Armenians in Moscow who allegedly transported young women from Armenia to the UAE via Russia. The suspects were immediately extradited to the Armenian authorities to face prosecution, he said.

"They were flown to Yerevan and set free a month later," says Baghdasarian. "I asked one law-enforcement official why they were released. He said they probably paid a lot of money."

That there is lots of money involved is obvious from figures provided to Hetq by the Armenian Central Bank. They show that the total amount of cash remittances wired to Armenia from the UAE totaled almost \$8.8 million last year, up from just \$1.6 million registered in 2001. With Armenian imports from the UAE by far exceeding exports in 2004, a large part of that money may well have been generated by the prostitution networks.

Manoogian, who runs a charity and small businesses in Nagorno-Karabakh, believes that many of the trafficking victims can be repatriated and reintegrated into Armenian society. He is currently lobbying international and Diaspora organizations to finance a special rehabilitation center for them. "Right now we are in the process of putting together a rehabilitation program," he says.

But Baghdasarian is skeptical about the effort: "Ninety percent of those women knew what awaits them in Dubai and are earning much more than they could do here." END TEXT.

14. (U) Published by Anadolu Ajansi, Friday, April 29:

TITLE: SECURITY FORCES INTERCEPT 25 ILLEGAL MIGRANTS IN ISTANBUL

BEGIN TEXT: ISTANBUL (A.A) - 29.04.2005 - Turkish security forces intercepted 25 migrants in Istanbul who had entered Turkey illegally, sources told the A.A on Friday.

The migrants of Pakistani origin who did not have passports and ID cards, will be deported once the legal proceedings are completed. Meanwhile, 2 Iraqi and 3 Pakistani were detained for human trafficking. END TEXT.



